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A COMPASSIONATE MAW

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A D D R E S S

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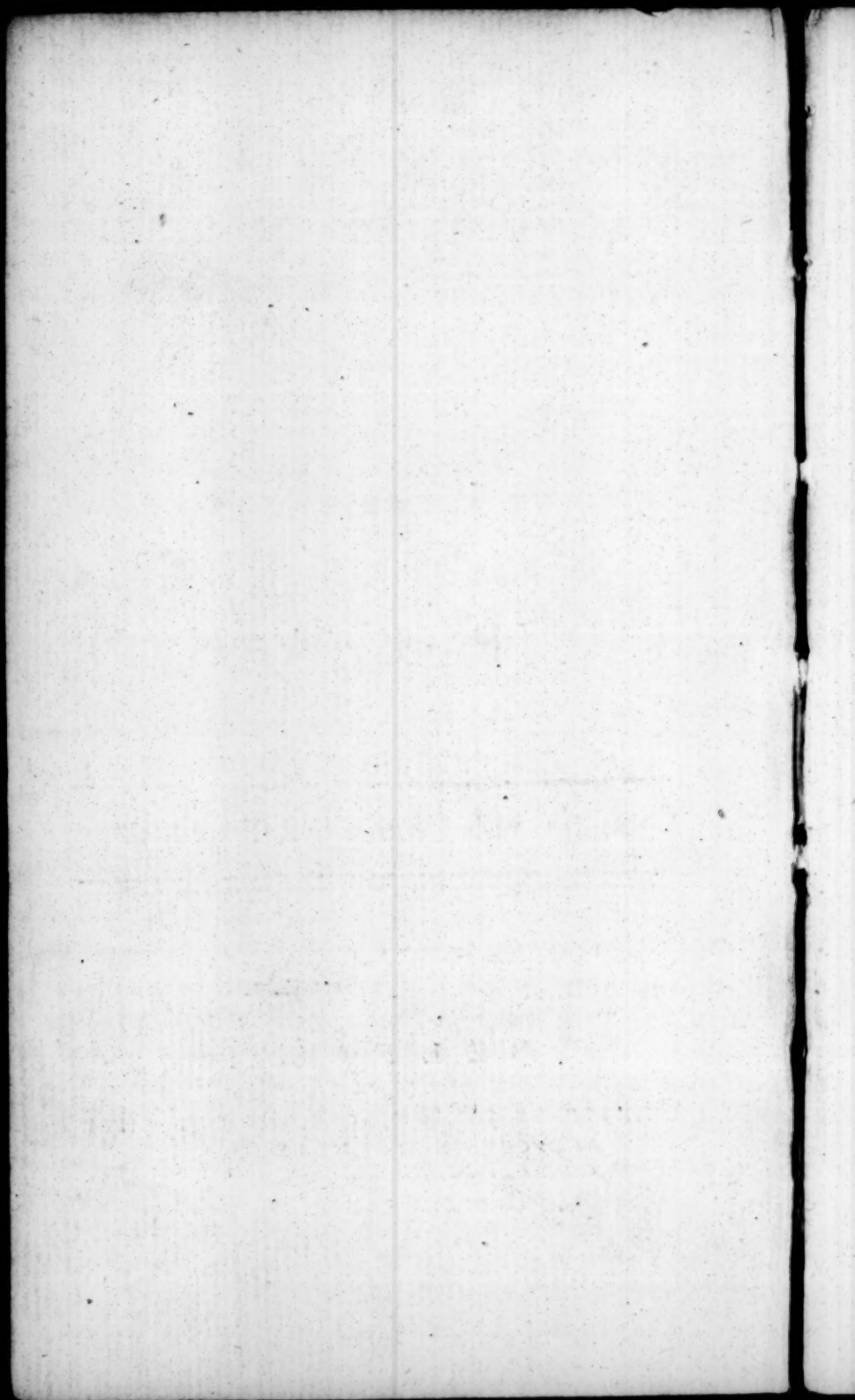
THE INHABITANTS OF
I R E L A N D.

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M.DCC.LXXVIII.



A COMPASSIONATE
A D D R E S S
T O
THE INHABITANTS OF IRELAND.

LIMERICK MAY 10. 1778.

My dear Brethren,

1. **B**EFORE I left *London* (two or three months ago) a general panic prevailed there. Some vehemently affirmed, and others potently believed, "That the nation was in a most desperate state; that it was upon the very brink of ruin, past all hopes of recovery." Soon after I found that the same panic had spread throughout the city of *Bristol*. I traced it likewise wherever I went, in *Gloucestershire*, *Worcestershire*,

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Stafford-

Staffordshire, Cheshire and Lancashire. When I crossed the channel, I was surprized to find, it had got before me to *Ireland*, and that it was not only spread thro' *Dublin* first, and thence to every part of *Leinster*, but had found its way into *Munster* too, into *Cork*, *Bandon*, and *Limerick*: In all which places people were terrifying themselves and their neighbours, just as they did in *London*.

2. "How is it possible, say they, that we should contend with so many enemies together? If General *Washington* has (as Mr *Franklin* of *Limerick* computes) sixty five thousand men: If the powerful fleet, and numerous armies of *France* are added to these: If *Spain*, in consequence of the family compact, declares war at the same time: And if *Portugal* join in confederacy with them, what will become of us? Add to these the enemies of our own household, ready to start up on every side: And when *France* invades us from without, and these from within, what can follow but ruin and destruction?"

3. I would fain speak a word of comfort to my poor neighbours, that they may not be frightened to death. Perhaps, my friends, things are not in altogether so desperate a situation as you imagine. When I was at *Cork* last week, I convers'd largely with some persons, who were just landed from *Philadelphia*. I could thoroughly depend upon the account they gave, as they had had full means of information, and had no possible interest to serve, by misrepresenting any thing. The substance of their account was this. "In December General *Washington* had seventeen or eighteen thousand

thousand men in his army. From that time thirty, forty, sometimes fifty of them died in a day by a pestilential fever: And in two months time, upwards of fifteen hundred deserted to General *Howe*. So that many were inclined to believe he had not when we came away much more than five thousand effective men left." Never fright yourselves therefore about General *Washington's* huge army, that melted away like snow in harvest. The English forces mean time are in perfect health (about sixteen thousand) and have plenty of all things.

4. " But there are twenty or thirty thousand recruits to join him in a month or two, and what will General *Howe* do then?" Just as he does now: He will regard any number of them as much as he would so many sparrows. For what cou'd fifty thousand raw men do, that had never seen the face of an enemy? Especially when, by the tenure of their service, they were only to stay in the army nine months? (the circumstance concerning which General *Washington* so earnestly expostulated with the Congress) Will these dead-doing men, do you think, be in haste to cut off all the old, weather-beaten *Englishmen*? Otherwise they will not have made an end of them, before the time comes for their returning home!

5. " But I do not believe the *American* army is in this condition". If you do not, I cannot help it. And you have no more right to be angry at me for believing it, than I at you, for not believing it. Let each of us then, without resentment

or bitterness, permit the other to think for himself.

6. "O, but the *French* will swallow us up." They will as soon swallow up the sea. Pray, which way is it they are to come at us? Unless they can fly through the air. It is certain our fleet, (notwithstanding the shameless lies told to the contrary) is now every way in a better condition than it ever was since *England* was a nation. And while we are indisputably masters at sea, what can the *French* do but gnash their teeth at us? "Nay, but *Spain* will join them." That is by no means clear. They have not forgot the *Havannab* yet. But if they do, we are well able to deal with them both; full as able as we were the last war.

7. "Yea, but *Portugal* too will declare against us." I do not believe one word of it. The *Portuguese* (to say nothing about their gratitude) are not such arrant fools. They understand their own interest better: They need no one to inform them, that if the *English* were only to stand neuter, the *Spaniards* would eat them up at a mouthful. They well know, the present war will not last always: And in the end, either *England* will prevail, or not. If it does not, if *Spain* prevail over *England*, *England* cannot defend *Portugal*. If *England* prevail over *Spain*, she will not. She will doubtless leave his most Faithful Majesty, to receive the reward he has so justly deserved, from the fleet and army of his neighbour.

8. "But

8. " But do not you know the *French* squadron is sailed to assist them with four thousand soldiers on board?" I really do not, nor *you* neither; nor any man in *Ireland*. That they are sailed I know: But not whether to *Afric*, or *Asia*, or *America*. But have they four thousand soldiers on board? And is that all? I heard, they were twelve thousand. But in how many transports did they embark? We could not hear of one. Where then were the soldiers to be put? In the hold of the men of war? Or on the shrowds? This story is not well devised: it manifestly confutes itself. But suppose twelve thousand are sailed, are they sure to land? Do they command the winds and seas? And if they do, are they sure the *English* fleet will not speak with them by the way? If they escape these, are they very sure of landing without opposition? Is it certain, that all our soldiers will stand mean time with their fingers in their mouth? How great then is the odds, against the *French* ever joining the *American* army? Although if they did, there is no doubt but General *Howe* would give a good account of them all.

9. " Why to say the truth, we are not so much afraid of *Portugal*, or *Spain*, yea or of *France* itself, as we are of those intestine vipers, who are always ready to tear out their mother's bowels. And how should we defend ourselves against these, if they made a general insurrection?" This is worth considering. It is certain, it is undoubtedly plain, it is beyond all contradiction, if they gave a large dose of laudanum to all his Majesty's liege subjects; If every man, woman and child in the four provinces fell fast asleep all at once; if they
all

all continued to sleep 'till the insurgents had brought their matters to bear, in every city and town in the kingdom; If then the conspirators came all in the same hour, and cut off their heads at a stroke: The nation certainly, without all doubt, would be in a very fearful condition! But 'till this is the case, you need no more be afraid of ten thousand White-boys, than of ten thousand crows.

10. There is no need at present that an handful of men should oppose themselves to a multitude. Blessed be God, there are still within the kingdom some thousands of regular troops, of horse as well foot, who are ready to march wherever they shall be wanted: Over and above the Independent companies at *Birr*, at *Mountmellick*, at *Bandon*, and at *Cork*: At which city alone no less than six of these companies are formed already: Which it is supposed, when they shall be completed, will contain at least two thousand men. And as they exercise themselves every day, they are already expert in the whole military exercise. So that were any so mad as to attempt making an insurrection, it would be crushed in its very infancy.

11. "But is there not another ground of fear? Is there not a *God that judgeth the earth*? And have not *England and Ireland* (to speak in the language of scripture) *filled up the measure of their iniquity*?" I answer, 1. I allow that wickedness of various kinds has overspread the land like a flood. It would be easy to enlarge upon this melancholy truth: It cannot be denied, that

"The

“ The rich, the poor, the high, the low,
 Have wander’d from his mild command :
 The floods of wickedness o’erflow,
 And deluge all the guilty land :
 People and priest lie drown’d in sin,
 And Tophet yawns to take them in.”

But yet, 2. I totally deny that either *England* or *Ireland* have yet *filled up the measure of their iniquities*. “ Why, what have they not done? What abomination can be named or conceived which they have not committed?” I will tell you : They have not done what was done of old, before God delivered up the Jews to destruction. They have not *shed the blood of the just in the midst of Jerusalem*. Neither in *London*, *Dublin*, nor any other of our cities, has there been any instance of the kind. To which of our governors in either *England* or *Ireland* can those words of our Lord be applied, *Behold, I send unto you prophets—And some of them ye will kill; and some of them ye will scourge, and persecute from city to city? O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! Thou killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee!* (Mat. 23. 34, &c.) Now neither *England* nor *Ireland* has done this, at least during the present century. Therefore it cannot be affirmed, that they have *filled up the measure of their iniquities*. Consequently we have no reason to believe, that our Lord will yet say, *Behold your house is left unto you desolate!*

12. I have another reason to believe, that God will yet have compassion upon a sinful land. What was it, which he said of old time to *Abraham*.

ham interceding for guilty Sodom? I will not destroy the city, if there be fifty, twenty, yea ten righteous men found in it. And are there not ten, twenty, fifty righteous men, to be found in our Sodom? Dare you affirm, or have you reason to believe, that there are only twenty hundred? And will God destroy the righteous with the wicked! shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Besides, will not all these righteous men wrestle with God for their people and nation? And does he not hear the prayer?

“ Let *Moses* in the spirit groan,
And God cries out let me alone!

Let me alone, that all my wrath
May rise the wicked to consume!
While justice hears thy praying faith
It cannot seal the sinners doom.
My son is in my servant's pray'r,
And *Jesus* forces one to spare.”

13. I add but one reason more, why we may rationally hope, that these kingdoms, sinful as they are, will not yet be given up to destruction. Religion, true, scriptural religion, the love of God and our neighbour, inviting men to avoid evil and to do good, to practise justice, mercy and truth, is not decreasing therein: No, it is continually increasing in every part of the kingdom; as an impartial enquirer cannot but observe, whether he turn East, West, North or South. Now I know no instance in all history, from the earliest ages to this day, of the Governor of the world delivering up a kingdom to destruction, while
Religion

Religion was increasing in it. I believe no such instance can be found. And indeed it seems to be totally inconsistent with his wisdom and goodness, and with the rules whereby he hath governed all nations from the beginning of the world. Fear him therefore with a filial fear; and you need fear nothing but him. In this sense also, *one thing is needful*, The making God your friend. And when we have *a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards man*, we may say with boldness, *The Lord of hosts is with us: The God of Jacob is our refuge. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the depth of the sea. The flood thereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the most High.*

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